

ORLEY FARM.

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

With Illustrations

BY

J. E. MILLAIS.



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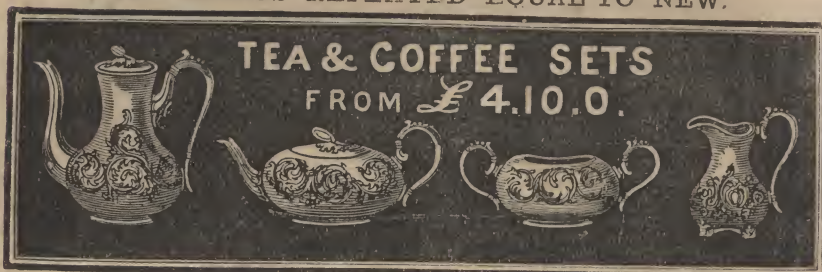
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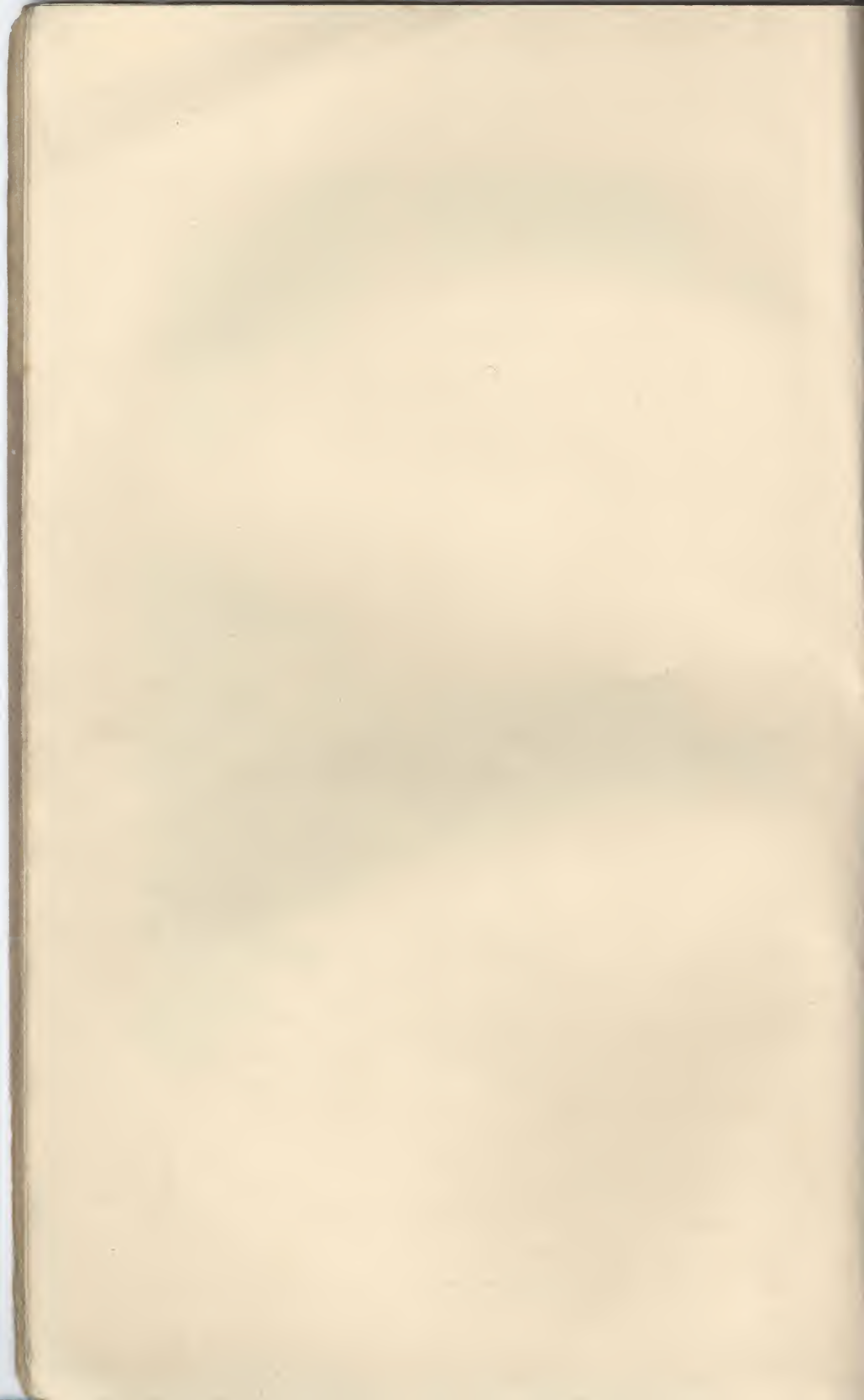




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CHAPTER XXXVII.

PEREGRINE'S ELOQUENCE.

IN the last chapter Peregrine Mason called at Orley Farm with the view of discussing with Lucius Mason the conduct of their respective progenitors; and, as will be remembered, the young men agreed in a general way that their progenitors were about to make fools of themselves. Poor Peregrine, however, had other troubles on his mind. Not only had his grandfather been successful in love, but he had been unsuccessful. As he had journeyed home from Noningsby to The Cleeve in a high-wheeled vehicle which he called his trap, he had determined, being then in a frame of mind somewhat softer than was usual with him, to tell all his troubles to his mother. It sounds as though it were lack-a-daisical—such a resolve as this on the part of a dashing young man, who had been given to the pursuit of rats, and was now a leader among the sons of Nimrod in the pursuit of foxes. Young men of the present day, when got up for the eyes of the world, look and talk as though they could never tell their mothers anything,—as though they were harder than flint, and as little in want of a woman's counsel and a woman's help as a colonel of horse on the morning of a battle. But the rigid virility of his outward accoutrements does in no way alter the man of flesh and blood who wears them; the young hero, so stern to the eye, is, I believe, as often tempted by stress of sentiment to lay bare the sorrow of his heart as is his sister. On this occasion Peregrine said to himself that he would lay bare the sorrow of his heart. He would find out what others thought of that marriage which he had proposed to himself; and then, if his mother encouraged him, and his grandfather approved, he would make another attack, beginning on the side of the judge, or perhaps on that of Lady Staveley.

But he found that others, as well as he, were labouring under a stress of sentiment; and when about to tell his own tale, he had learned that a tale was to be told to him. He had dined with Lady Mason, his mother, and his grandfather, and the dinner had been very silent. Three of the party were in love, and the fourth was burdened with the telling of the tale. The baronet himself said nothing on the subject as he and his grandson sat over their wine;

but later in the evening Peregrine was summoned to his mother's room, and she, with considerable hesitation and much diffidence, informed him of the coming nuptials.

'Marry Lady Mason!' he had said.

'Yes, Peregrine. Why should he not do so if they both wish it?'

Peregrine thought that there were many causes and impediments sufficiently just why no such marriage should take place, but he had not his arguments ready at his fingers' ends. He was so stunned by the intelligence that he could say but little about it on that occasion. By the few words that he did say, and by the darkness of his countenance, he showed plainly enough that he disapproved. And then his mother said all that she could in the baronet's favour, pointing out that in a pecuniary way Peregrine would receive benefit rather than injury.

'I'm not thinking of the money, mother.'

'No, my dear; but it is right that I should tell you how considerate your grandfather is.'

'All the same, I wish he would not marry this woman.'

'Woman, Peregrine! You should not speak in that way of a friend whom I dearly love.'

'She is a woman all the same.' And then he sat sulkily, looking at the fire. His own stress of sentiment did not admit of free discussion at the present moment, and was necessarily postponed. On that other affair he was told that his grandfather would be glad to see him on the following morning; and then he left his mother.

'Your grandfather, Peregrine, asked for my assent,' said Mrs. Orme; 'and I thought it right to give it.' This she said to make him understand that it was no longer in her power to oppose the match. And she was thoroughly glad that this was so, for she would have lacked the courage to oppose Sir Peregrine in anything.

On the next morning Peregrine saw his grandfather before breakfast. His mother came to his room door while he was dressing to whisper a word of caution to him. 'Pray, be courteous to him,' she said. 'Remember how good he is to you—to us both! Say that you congratulate him.'

'But I don't,' said Peregrine.

'Ah, but, Peregrine——'

'I'll tell you what I'll do, mother. I'll leave the house altogether and go away, if you wish it.'

'Oh, Peregrine! How can you speak in that way? But he's waiting now. Pray, pray, be kind in your manner to him.'

He descended with the same sort of feeling which had oppressed him on his return home after his encounter with Carrotty Bob in Smithfield. Since then he had been on enduring good terms with

his grandfather, but now again all the discomforts of war were imminent.

'Good morning, sir,' he said, on going into his grandfather's dressing-room.

'Good morning, Peregrine.' And then there was silence for a moment or two.

'Did you see your mother last night?'

'Yes; I did see her.'

'And she told you what it is that I propose to do?'

'Yes, sir; she told me.'

'I hope you understand, my boy, that it will not in any way affect your own interests injuriously.'

'I don't care about that, sir—one way or the other.'

'But I do, Peregrine. Having seen to that I think that I have a right to please myself in this matter.'

'Oh, yes, sir; I know you have the right.'

'Especially as I can benefit others. Are you aware that your mother has cordially given her consent to the marriage?'

'She told me that you had asked her, and that she had agreed to it. She would agree to anything.'

'Peregrine, that is not the way in which you should speak of your mother.'

And then the young man stood silent, as though there was nothing more to be said. Indeed, he had nothing more to say. He did not dare to bring forward in words all the arguments against the marriage which were now crowding themselves into his memory, but he could not induce himself to wish the old man joy, or to say any of those civil things which are customary on such occasions. The baronet sat for a while, silent also, and a cloud of anger was coming across his brow; but he checked that before he spoke. 'Well, my boy,' he said, and his voice was almost more than usually kind, 'I can understand your thoughts, and we will say nothing of them at present. All I will ask of you is to treat Lady Mason in a manner befitting the position in which I intend to place her.'

'If you think it will be more comfortable, sir, I will leave The Cleeve for a time.'

'I hope that may not be necessary—Why should it? Or at any-rate, not as yet,' he added, as a thought as to his wedding day occurred to him. And then the interview was over, and in another half-hour they met again at breakfast.

In the breakfast-room Lady Mason was also present. Peregrine was the last to enter, and as he did so his grandfather was already standing in his usual place, with the book of Prayers in his hand, waiting that the servants should arrange themselves at their chairs before he knelt down. There was no time then for much greeting,

but Peregrine did shake hands with her as he stepped across to his accustomed corner. He shook hands with her, and felt that her hand was very cold; but he did not look at her, nor did he hear any answer given to his few muttered words. When they all got up she remained close to Mrs. Orme, as though she might thus be protected from the anger which she feared from Sir Peregrine's other friends. And at breakfast also she sat close to her, far away from the baronet, and almost hidden by the urn from his grandson. Sitting there she said nothing; neither in truth did she eat anything. It was a time of great suffering to her, for she knew that her coming could not be welcomed by the young heir. 'It must not be,' she said to herself over and over again. 'Though he turn me out of the house, I must tell him that it cannot be so.'

After breakfast Peregrine had ridden over to Orley Farm, and there held his consultation with the other heir. On his returning to The Cleeve, he did not go into the house, but having given up his horse to a groom, wandered away among the woods. Lucius Mason had suggested that he, Peregrine Orme, should himself speak to Lady Mason on this matter. He felt that his grandfather would be very angry, should he do so. But he did not regard that much. He had filled himself full with the theory of his duties, and he would act up to it. He would see her, without telling any one what was his purpose, and put it to her whether she would bring down this destruction on so noble a gentleman. Having thus resolved, he returned to the house, when it was already dark, and making his way into the drawing-room, sat himself down before the fire, still thinking of his plan. The room was dark, as such rooms are dark for the last hour or two before dinner in January, and he sat himself in an arm-chair before the fire, intending to sit there till it would be necessary that he should go to dress. It was an unaccustomed thing with him so to place himself at such a time, or to remain in the drawing-room at all till he came down for a few minutes before dinner; but he did so now, having been thrown out of his usual habits by the cares upon his mind. He had been so seated about a quarter of an hour, and was already nearly asleep, when he heard the rustle of a woman's garment, and looking round, with such light as the fire gave him, perceived that Lady Mason was in the room. She had entered very quietly, and was making her way in the dark to a chair which she frequently occupied, between the fire and one of the windows, and in doing so she passed so near Peregrine as to touch him with her dress.

'Lady Mason,' he said, speaking, in the first place, in order that she might know that she was not alone, 'it is almost dark; shall I ring for candles for you?'

She started at hearing his voice, begged his pardon for disturbing him, declined his offer of light, and declared that she was going up

again to her own room immediately. But it occurred to him that if it would be well that he should speak to her, it would be well that he should do so at once; and what opportunity could be more fitting than the present? 'If you are not in a hurry about anything,' he said, 'would you mind staying here for a few minutes?'

'Oh no, certainly not.' But he could perceive that her voice trembled in uttering even these few words.

'I think I'd better light a candle,' he said; and then he did light one of those which stood on the corner of the mantelpiece,—a solitary candle, which only seemed to make the gloom of the large room visible. She, however, was standing close to it, and would have much preferred that the room should have been left to its darkness.

'Won't you sit down for a few minutes?' and then she sat down. 'I'll just shut the door, if you don't mind.' And then, having done so, he returned to his own chair and again faced the fire. He saw that she was pale and nervous, and he did not like to look at her as he spoke. He began to reflect also that they might probably be interrupted by his mother, and he wished that they could adjourn to some other room. That, however, seemed to be impossible; so he summoned up all his courage, and began his task.

'I hope you won't think me uncivil, Lady Mason, for speaking to you about this affair.'

'Oh no, Mr. Orme; I am sure that you will not be uncivil to me.'

'Of course I cannot help feeling a great concern in it, for it's very nearly the same, you know, as if he were my father. Indeed, if you come to that, it's almost worse; and I can assure you it is nothing about money that I mind. Many fellows in my place would be afraid about that, but I don't care twopence what he does in that respect. He is so honest and so noble-hearted, that I am sure he won't do me a wrong.'

'I hope not, Mr. Orme; and certainly not in respect to me.'

'I only mention it for fear you should misunderstand me. But there are other reasons, Lady Mason, why this marriage will make me—make me very unhappy.'

'Are there? I shall be so unhappy if I make others unhappy.'

'You will then,—I can assure you of that. It is not only me, but your own son. I was up with him to-day, and he thinks of it the same as I do.'

'What did he say, Mr. Orme?'

'What did he say? Well, I don't exactly remember his words; but he made me understand that your marriage with Sir Peregrine would make him very unhappy. He did indeed. Why do you not see him yourself, and talk to him?'

'I thought it best to write to him in the first place.'

‘Well, now you have written; and don’t you think it would be well that you should go up and see him? You will find that he is quite as strong against it as I am,—quite.’

Peregrine, had he known it, was using the arguments which were of all the least likely to induce Lady Mason to pay a visit to Orley Farm. She dreaded the idea of a quarrel with her son, and would have made almost any sacrifice to prevent such a misfortune; but at the present moment she feared the anger of his words almost more than the anger implied by his absence. If this trial could be got over, she would return to him and almost throw herself at his feet; but till that time, might it not be well that they should be apart? At any rate, these tidings of his discontent could not be efficacious in inducing her to seek him.

‘Dear Lucius!’ she said, not addressing herself to her companion, but speaking her thoughts. ‘I would not willingly give him cause to be discontented with me.’

‘He is, then, very discontented. I can assure you of that.’

‘Yes; he and I think differently about all this.’

‘Ah, but don’t you think you had better speak to him before you quite make up your mind? He is your son, you know; and an uncommon clever fellow too. He’ll know how to say all this much better than I do.’

‘Say what, Mr. Orme?’

‘Why, of course you can’t expect that anybody will like such a marriage as this;—that is, anybody except you and Sir Peregrine.’

‘Your mother does not object to it.’

‘My mother! But you don’t know my mother yet. She would not object to have her head cut off if anybody wanted it that she cared about. I do not know how it has all been managed, but I suppose Sir Peregrine asked her. Then of course she would not object. But look at the common sense of it, Lady Mason. What does the world always say when an old man like my grandfather marries a young woman?’

‘But I am not —.’ So far she got, and then she stopped herself.

‘We have all liked you very much. I’m sure I have for one; and I’ll go in for you, heart and soul, in this shameful law business. When Lucius asked me, I didn’t think anything of going to that scoundrel in Hamworth; and all along I’ve been delighted that Sir Peregrine took it up. By heavens! I’d be glad to go down to Yorkshire myself, and walk into that fellow that wants to do you this injury. I would indeed; and I’ll stand by you as strong as anybody. But, Lady Mason, when it comes to one’s grandfather marrying, it—it—it—. Think what people in the county will say of him. If it was your father, and if he had been at the top of the tree all his life, how would you like to see him get a fall,

and be laughed at as though he were in the mud just when he was too old ever to get up again ?

I am not sure whether Lucius Mason, with all his cleverness, could have put the matter much better, or have used a style of oratory more efficacious to the end in view. Peregrine had drawn his picture with a coarse pencil, but he had drawn it strongly, and with graphic effect. And then he paused ; not with self-confidence, or as giving his companion time to see how great had been his art, but in want of words, and somewhat confused by the strength of his own thoughts. So he got up and poked the fire, turned his back to it, and then sat down again. ' It is such a deuce of a thing, Lady Mason,' he said, ' that you must not be angry with me for speaking out.'

' Oh, Mr. Orme, I am not angry, and I do not know what to say to you.'

' Why don't you speak to Lucius ?'

' What could he say more than you have said ? Dear Mr. Orme, I would not injure him,—your grandfather, I mean,—for all that the world holds.'

' You will injure him ;—in the eyes of all his friends.'

' Then I will not do it. I will go to him, and beg him that it may not be so. I will tell him that I cannot. Anything will be better than bringing him to sorrow or disgrace.'

' By Jove ! but will you really ?' Peregrine was startled and almost frightened at the effect of his own eloquence. What would the baronet say when he learned that he had been talked out of his wife by his grandson ?

' Mr. Orme,' continued Lady Mason, ' I am sure you do not understand how this matter has been brought about. If you did, however much it might grieve you, you would not blame me, even in your thoughts. From the first to the last my only desire has been to obey your grandfather in everything.'

' But you would not marry him out of obedience ?'

' I would—and did so intend. I would, certainly ; if in doing so I did him no injury. You say that your mother would give her life for him. So would I ;—that or anything else that I could give, without hurting him or others. It was not I that sought for this marriage ; nor did I think of it. If you were in my place, Mr. Orme, you would know how difficult it is to refuse.'

Peregrine again got up, and standing with his back to the fire, thought over it all again. His soft heart almost relented towards the woman who had borne his rough words with so much patient kindness. Had Sir Peregrine been there then, and could he have condescended so far, he might have won his grandson's consent without much trouble. Peregrine, like some other generals, had expended his energy in gaining his victory, and was more ready

now to come to easy terms than he would have been had he suffered in the combat.

'Well,' he said after a while, 'I'm sure I'm very much obliged to you for the manner in which you have taken what I said to you. Nobody knows about it yet, I suppose; and perhaps, if you will talk to the governor——'

'I will talk to him, Mr. Orme.'

'Thank you; and then perhaps all things may turn out right. I'll go and dress now.' And so saying he took his departure, leaving her to consider how best she might act at this crisis of her life, so that things might go right, if such were possible. The more she thought of it, the less possible it seemed that her affairs should be made to go right.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

OH, INDEED!

THE dinner on that day at The Cleeve was not very dull. Peregrine had some hopes that the idea of the marriage might be abandoned, and was at any rate much better disposed towards Lady Mason than he had been. He spoke to her, asking her whether she had been out, and suggesting roast mutton or some such creature comfort. This was lost neither on Sir Peregrine nor on Mrs. Orme, and they both exerted themselves to say a few words in a more cheery tone than had been customary in the house for the last day or two. Lady Mason herself did not say much; but she had sufficient tact to see the effort which was being made; and though she spoke but little she smiled and accepted graciously the courtesies that were tendered to her.

Then the two ladies went away, and Peregrine was again left with his grandfather. 'That was a nasty accident that Graham had going out of Monkton Grange,' said he, speaking on the moment of his closing the dining-room door after his mother. 'I suppose you heard all about it, sir?' Having fought his battle so well before dinner, he was determined to give some little rest to his half-vanquished enemy.

'The first tidings we heard were that he was dead,' said Sir Peregrine, filling his glass.

'No; he wasn't dead. But of course you know that now. He broke an arm and two ribs, and got rather a bad squeeze. He was just behind me, you know, and I had to wait for him. I lost the run, and had to see Harriet Tristram go away with the best lead any one has had to a fast thing this year. That's an uncommon nasty place at the back of Monkton Grange.'

‘I hope, Peregrine, you don’t think too much about Harriet Tristram.’

‘Think of her! who? I? Think of her in what sort of a way? I think she goes uncommonly well to hounds.’

‘That may be, but I should not wish to see you pin your happiness on any lady that was celebrated chiefly for going well to hounds.’

‘Do you mean marry her?’ and Peregrine immediately made a strong comparison in his mind between Miss Tristram and Madeline Staveley.

‘Yes; that’s what I did mean.’

‘I wouldn’t have her if she owned every fox-cover in the county. No, by Jove! I know a trick worth two of that. It’s jolly enough to see them going, but as to being in love with them—in that sort of way—’

‘You are quite right, my boy; quite right. It is not that that a man wants in a wife.’

‘No,’ said Peregrine, with a melancholy cadence in his voice, thinking of what it was that he did want. And so they sat sipping their wine. The turn which the conversation had taken had for the moment nearly put Lady Mason out of the young man’s head.

‘You would be very young to marry yet,’ said the baronet.

‘Yes, I should be young; but I don’t know that there is any harm in that.’

‘Quite the contrary, if a young man feels himself to be sufficiently settled. Your mother I know would be very glad that you should marry early;—and so should I, if you married well.’

What on earth could all this mean? It could not be that his grandfather knew that he was in love with Miss Staveley; and had this been known his grandfather would not have talked of Harriet Tristram. ‘Oh yes; of course a fellow should marry well. I don’t think much of marrying for money.’

‘Nor do I, Peregrine;—I think very little of it.’

‘Nor about being of very high birth.’

‘Well; it would make me unhappy—very unhappy if you were to marry below your own rank.’

‘What do you call my own rank?’

‘I mean any girl whose father is not a gentleman, and whose mother is not a lady; and of whose education among ladies you could not feel certain.’

‘I could be quite certain about her,’ said Peregrine, very innocently.

‘Her! what her?’

‘Oh, I forgot that we were talking about nobody.’

‘You don’t mean Harriet Tristram?’

‘No, certainly not.’

‘Of whom were you thinking, Peregrine? May I ask—if it be not too close a secret?’ And then again there was a pause, during which Peregrine emptied his glass and filled it again. He had no objection to talk to his grandfather about Miss Staveley, but he felt ashamed of having allowed the matter to escape him in this sort of way. ‘I will tell you why I ask, my boy,’ continued the baronet. ‘I am going to do that which many people will call a very foolish thing.’

‘You mean about Lady Mason.’

‘Yes; I mean my own marriage with Lady Mason. We will not talk about that just at present, and I only mention it to explain that before I do so, I shall settle the property permanently. If you were married I should at once divide it with you. I should like to keep the old house myself, till I die——’

‘Oh, sir!’

‘But sooner than give you cause of offence I would give that up.’

‘I would not consent to live in it unless I did so as your guest.’

‘Until your marriage I think of settling on you a thousand a year;—but it would add to my happiness if I thought it likely that you would marry soon. Now may I ask of whom were you thinking?’

Peregrine paused for a second or two before he made any reply, and then he brought it out boldly. ‘I was thinking of Madeline Staveley.’

‘Then, my boy, you were thinking of the prettiest girl and the best-bred lady in the county. Here’s her health,’ and he filled for himself a bumper of claret. ‘You couldn’t have named a woman whom I should be more proud to see you bring home. And your mother’s opinion of her is the same as mine. I happen to know that;’ and with a look of triumph he drank his glass of wine, as though much that was very joyful to him had been already settled.

‘Yes,’ said Peregrine mournfully, ‘she is a very nice girl; at least I think so.’

‘The man who can win her, Peregrine, may consider himself to be a lucky fellow. You were quite right in what you were saying about money. No man feels more sure of that than I do. But if I am not mistaken Miss Staveley will have something of her own. I rather think that Arbuthnot got ten thousand pounds.’

‘I’m sure I don’t know, sir,’ said Peregrine; and his voice was by no means as much elated as that of his grandfather.

‘I think he did; or if he didn’t get it all, the remainder is settled on him. And the judge is not a man to behave better to one child than to another.’

‘I suppose not.’

And then the conversation flagged a little, for the enthusiasm was all one side. It was moreover on that side which naturally would have been the least enthusiastic. Poor Peregrine had only told

half his secret as yet, and that not the most important half. To Sir Peregrine the tidings, as far as he had heard them, were very pleasant. He did not say to himself that he would purchase his grandson's assent to his own marriage by giving his consent to his grandson's marriage. But it did seem to him that the two affairs, acting upon each other, might both be made to run smooth. His heir could have made no better choice in selecting the lady of his love. Sir Peregrine had feared much that some Miss Tristram or the like might have been tendered to him as the future Lady Orme, and he was agreeably surprised to find that a new mistress for The Cleeve had been so well chosen. He would be all kindness to his grandson and win from him, if it might be possible, reciprocal courtesy and complaisance. 'Your mother will be very pleased when she hears this,' he said.

'I meant to tell my mother,' said Peregrine, still very dolefully, 'but I do not know that there is anything in it to please her. I only said that I—I admired Miss Staveley.'

'My dear boy, if you'll take my advice you'll propose to her at once. You have been staying in the same house with her, and ——'

'But I have.'

'Have what?'

'I have proposed to her.'

'Well?'

'And she has refused me. You know all about it now, and there's no such great cause for joy.'

'Oh, you have proposed to her. Have you spoken to her father or mother?'

'What was the use when she told me plainly that she did not care for me? Of course I should have asked her father. As to Lady Staveley, she and I got on uncommonly well. I'm almost inclined to think that she would not have objected.'

'It would be a very nice match for them, and I dare say she would not have objected.' And then for some ten minutes they sat looking at the fire. Peregrine had nothing more to say about it, and the baronet was thinking how best he might encourage his grandson.

'You must try again, you know,' at last he said.

'Well; I fear not. I do not think it would be any good. I'm not quite sure she does not care for some one else?'

'Who is he?'

'Oh, a fellow that's there. The man who broke his arm. I don't say she does, you know, and of course you won't mention it.'

Sir Peregrine gave the necessary promises, and then endeavoured to give encouragement to the lover. He would himself see the judge, if it were thought expedient, and explain what liberal settlement would be made on the lady in the event of her altering her

mind. 'Young ladies, you know, are very prone to alter their minds on such matters,' said the old man. In answer to which Peregrine declared his conviction that Madeline Staveley would not alter her mind. But then do not all despondent lovers hold that opinion of their own mistresses?

Sir Peregrine had been a great gainer by what had occurred, and so he felt it. At any rate all the novelty of the question of his own marriage was over, as between him and Peregrine; and then he had acquired a means of being gracious which must almost disarm his grandson of all power of criticism. When he, an old man, was ready to do so much to forward the views of a young man, could it be possible that the young man should oppose his wishes? And Peregrine was aware that his power of opposition was thus lessened.

In the evening nothing remarkable occurred between them. Each had his or her own plans; but these plans could not be furthered by anything to be said in a general assembly. Lady Mason had already told to Mrs. Orme all that had passed in the drawing-room before dinner, and Sir Peregrine had determined that he would consult Mrs. Orme as to that matter regarding Miss Staveley. He did not think much of her refusal. Young ladies always do refuse—at first.

On the day but one following this there came another visit from Mr. Furnival, and he was for a long time closeted with Sir Peregrine. Matthew Round had, he said, been with him, and had felt himself obliged in the performance of his duty to submit a case to counsel on behalf of his client Joseph Mason. He had not as yet received the written opinion of Sir Richard Leatheram, to whom he had applied; but nevertheless, as he wished to give every possible notice, he had called to say that his firm were of opinion that an action must be brought either for forgery or for perjury.

'For perjury!' Mr. Furnival had said.

'Well; yes. We would wish to be as little harsh as possible. But if we convict her of having sworn falsely when she gave evidence as to having copied the codicil herself, and having seen it witnessed by the pretended witnesses;—why in that case of course the property would go back.'

'I can't give any opinion as to what might be the result in such a case,' said Mr. Furnival.

Mr. Round had gone on to say that he thought it improbable that the action could be tried before the summer assizes.

'The sooner the better as far as we are concerned,' said Mr. Furnival.

'If you really mean that, I will see that there shall be no unnecessary delay.' Mr. Furnival had declared that he did really mean it, and so the interview had ended.

Mr. Furnival had really meant it, fully concurring in the opinion

which Mr. Chaffanbrass had expressed on this matter ; but nevertheless the increasing urgency of the case had almost made him tremble. He still carried himself with a brave outside before Mat Round, protesting as to the utter absurdity as well as cruelty of the whole proceeding ; but his conscience told him that it was not absurd. 'Perjury !' he said to himself, and then he rang the bell for Crabwitz. The upshot of that interview was that Mr. Crabwitz received a commission to arrange a meeting between that great barrister, the member for the Essex Marshes, and Mr. Solomon Aram.

'Won't it look rather, rather—rather— ; you know what I mean, sir ?' Crabwitz had asked.

'We must fight these people with their own weapons,' said Mr. Furnival ;—not exactly with justice, seeing that Messrs. Round and Crook were not at all of the same calibre in the profession as Mr. Solomon Aram.

Mr. Furnival had already at this time seen Mr. Slow, of the firm of Slow and Bideawhile, who were Sir Peregrine's solicitors. This he had done chiefly that he might be able to tell Sir Peregrine that he had seen him. Mr. Slow had declared that the case was one which his firm would not be prepared to conduct, and he named a firm to which he should recommend his client to apply. But Mr. Furnival, carefully considering the whole matter, had resolved to take the advice and benefit by the experience of Mr. Chaffanbrass.

And then he went down once more to The Cleeve. Poor Mr. Furnival ! In these days he was dreadfully buffeted about both as regards his outer man and his inner conscience by this unfortunate case, giving up to it time that would otherwise have turned itself into heaps of gold ; giving up domestic conscience—for Mrs. Furnival was still hot in her anger against poor Lady Mason ; and giving up also much peace of mind, for he felt that he was soiling his hands by dirty work. But he thought of the lady's pale sweet face, of her tear-laden eye, of her soft beseeching tones, and gentle touch ; he thought of these things—as he should not have thought of them ;—and he persevered.

On this occasion he was closeted with Sir Peregrine for a couple of hours, and each heard much from the other that surprised him very much. Sir Peregrine, when he was told that Mr. Solomon Aram from Bucklersbury, and Mr. Chaffanbrass from the Old Bailey, were to be retained for the defence of his future wife, drew himself up and said that he could hardly approve of it. The gentlemen named were no doubt very clever in criminal concerns ; he could understand as much as that, though he had not had great opportunity of looking into affairs of that sort. But surely, in Lady Mason's case, assistance of such a description would hardly

be needed. Would it not be better to consult Messrs. Slow and Bideawhile?

And then it turned out that Messrs. Slow and Bideawhile had been consulted; and Mr. Furnival, not altogether successfully, endeavoured to throw dust into the baronet's eyes, declaring that in a combat with the devil one must use the devil's weapons. He assured Sir Peregrine that he had given the matter his most matured and indeed most painful professional consideration; there were unfortunate circumstances which required peculiar care; it was a matter which would depend entirely on the evidence of one or two persons who might be suborned; and in such a case it would be well to trust to those who knew how to break down and crush a lying witness. In such work as that Slow and Bideawhile would be innocent and ignorant as babes. As to breaking down and crushing a witness anxious to speak the truth, Mr. Furnival at that time said nothing.

'I will not think that falsehood and fraud can prevail,' said Sir Peregrine proudly.

'But they do prevail sometimes,' said Mr. Furnival. And then with much outer dignity of demeanour, but with some shame-faced tremblings of the inner man hidden under the guise of that outer dignity, Sir Peregrine informed the lawyer of his great purpose.

'Indeed!' said Mr. Furnival, throwing himself back into his chair with a start.

'Yes, Mr. Furnival. I should not have taken the liberty to trouble you with a matter so private in its nature, but for your close professional intimacy and great friendship with Lady Mason.'

'Oh, indeed!' said Mr. Furnival; and the baronet could understand from the lawyer's tone that even he did not approve.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WHY SHOULD HE GO?

'I AM well aware, Mr. Staveley, that you are one of those gentlemen who amuse themselves by frequently saying such things to girls. I had learned your character in that respect before I had been in the house two days.'

'Then, Miss Furnival, you learned what was very false. May I ask who has blackened me in this way in your estimation?' It will be easily seen from this that Mr. Augustus Staveley and Miss Furnival were at the present moment alone together in one of the rooms at Noningsby.

'My informant,' she replied, 'has been no one especial sinner whom you can take by the throat and punish. Indeed, if you

must shoot anybody, it should be chiefly yourself, and after that your father, and mother, and sisters. But you need not talk of being black. Such sins are venial now-a-days, and convey nothing deeper than a light shade of brown.'

'I regard a man who can act in such a way as very base.'

'Such a way as what, Mr. Staveley?'

'A man who can win a girl's heart for his own amusement.'

'I said nothing about the winning of hearts. That is treachery of the worst dye; but I acquit you of any such attempt. When there is a question of the winning of hearts men look so different.'

'I don't know how they look,' said Augustus, not altogether satisfied as to the manner in which he was being treated—'but such has been my audacity,—my too great audacity on the present occasion.'

'You are the most audacious of men, for your audacity would carry you to the feet of another lady to-morrow without the slightest check.'

'And that is the only answer I am to receive from you?'

'It is quite answer enough. What would you have me do? Get up and decline the honour of being Mrs. Augustus Staveley with a curtsy?'

'No—I would have you do nothing of the kind. I would have you get up and accept the honour,—with a kiss.'

'So that you might have the kiss, and I might have the—; I was going to say disappointment, only that would be untrue. Let me assure you that I am not so demonstrative in my tokens of regard.'

'I wonder whether you mean that you are not so honest?'

'No, Mr. Staveley; I mean nothing of the kind; and you are very impertinent to express such a supposition. What have I done or said to make you suppose that I have lost my heart to you?'

'As you have mine, it is at any rate human nature in me to hope that I might have yours.'

'Psha! your heart! You have been making a shuttlecock of it till it is doubtful whether you have not banged it to pieces. I know two ladies who carry in their caps two feathers out of it. It is so easy to see when a man is in love. They all go cross-gartered like Malvolio;—cross-gartered in their looks and words and doings.'

'And there is no touch of all this in me?'

'You cross-gartered! You have never got so far yet as a lack-a-daisical twist to the corner of your mouth. Did you watch Mr. Orme before he went away?'

'Why; was he cross-gartered?'

'But you men have no eyes; you never see anything. And your idea of love-making is to sit under a tree wishing, wondering

whether the ripe fruit will fall down into your mouth. Ripe fruit does sometimes fall, and then it is all well with you. But if it won't, you pass on and say that it is sour. As for climbing—'

'The fruit generally falls too fast to admit of such exercise,' said Staveley, who did not choose that all the sharp things should be said on the other side.

'And that is the result of your very extended experience? The orchards which have been opened to you have not, I fear, been of the first quality. Mr. Staveley, my hand will do very well by itself. Such is not the sort of climbing that is required. That is what I call stooping to pick up the fruit that has fallen.' And as she spoke, she moved a little away from him on the sofa.

'And how is a man to climb?'

'Do you really mean that you want a lesson? But if I were to tell you, my words would be thrown away. Men will not labour who have gotten all that they require without work. Why strive to deserve any woman, when women are plenty who do not care to be deserved? That plan of picking up the fallen apples is so much the easier.'

The lesson might perhaps have been given, and Miss Furnival might have imparted to Mr. Staveley her idea of 'excelsior' in the matter of love-making, had not Mr. Staveley's mother come into the room at that moment. Mrs. Staveley was beginning to fear that the results of her Christmas hospitality would not be satisfactory. Peregrine Orme, whom she would have been so happy to welcome to the warmest corner of her household temple as a son, had been sent away in wretchedness and disappointment. Madeline was moping about the house, hardly making an effort to look like herself; attributing, in her mother's ears, all her complaint to that unexpected interview with Peregrine Orme, but not so attributing it—as her mother fancied—with correctness. And there was Felix Graham still in the room upstairs, the doctor having said that he might be moved in a day or two;—that is, such movement might possibly be effected without detriment;—but having said also that another ten days of uninterrupted rest would be very desirable. And now, in addition to this, her son Augustus was to be found on every wet morning closeted somewhere with Sophia Furnival;—on every wet morning, and sometimes on dry mornings also!

And then, on this very day, Lady Staveley had discovered that Felix Graham's door in the corridor was habitually left open. She knew her child too well, and was too clear and pure in her own mind, to suppose that there was anything wrong in this;—that clandestine talkings were arranged, or anything planned in secret. What she feared was that which really occurred. The door was left open, and as Madeline passed Felix would say a word, and then

Madeline would pause and answer him. Such words as they were might have been spoken before all the household, and if so spoken would have been free from danger. But they were not free from danger when spoken in that way, in the passage of a half-closed doorway;—all which Lady Staveley understood perfectly.

‘Baker,’ she had said, with more of anger in her voice than was usual with her, ‘why do you leave that door open?’

‘I think it sweetens the room, my lady;’ and, indeed, Felix Graham sometimes thought so too.

‘Nonsense; every sound in the house must be heard. Keep it shut, if you please.’

‘Yes, my lady,’ said Mrs. Baker—who also understood perfectly.

‘He is better, my darling,’ said Mrs. Baker to Madeline, the same day; ‘and, indeed, for that he is well enough as regards eating and drinking. But it would be cruelty to move him yet. I heard what the doctor said.’

‘Who talks of moving him?’

‘Well, he talks of it himself; and the doctor said it might be possible. But I know what that means.’

‘What does it mean?’

‘Why, just this: that if we want to get rid of him, it won’t quite be the death of him.’

‘But who wants to get rid of him?’

‘I’m sure I don’t. I don’t mind my trouble the least in life. He’s as nice a young gentleman as ever I sat beside the bed of; and he’s full of spirit—he is.’

And then Madeline appealed to her mother. Surely her mother would not let Mr. Graham be sent out of the house in his present state, merely because the doctor said it might be possible to move him without causing his instant death! And tears stood in poor Madeline’s eyes as she thus pleaded the cause of the sick and wounded. This again tormented Lady Staveley, who found it necessary to give further caution to Mrs. Baker. ‘Baker,’ she said, ‘how can you be so foolish as to be talking to Miss Madeline about Mr. Graham’s arm?’

‘Who, my lady? I, my lady?’

‘Yes, you; when you know that the least thing frightens her. Don’t you remember how ill it made her when Roger?’—Roger was an old family groom—‘when Roger had that accident?’ Lady Staveley might have saved herself the trouble of the reminiscence as to Roger, for Baker knew more about it than that. When Roger’s scalp had been laid bare by a fall, Miss Madeline had chanced to see it, and had fainted; but Miss Madeline was not fainting now. Baker knew all about it, almost better than Lady Staveley herself. It was of very little use talking to Baker about Roger the groom. Baker thought that Mr. Felix Graham was a very nice young man,

in spite of his 'not being exactly handsomelike about the physiognomy,' as she remarked to one of the younger maids, who much preferred Peregrine Orme.

Coming away from this last interview with Mrs. Baker, Lady Staveley interrupted her son and Sophia Furnival in the back drawing-room, and began to feel that her solicitude for her children would be almost too much for her. Why had she asked that nasty girl to her house, and why would not the nasty girl go away? As for her going away, there was no present hope, for it had been arranged that she should stay for another fortnight. Why could not the Fates have been kind, and have allowed Felix Graham and Miss Furnival to fall in love with each other? 'I can never make a daughter of her if he does marry her,' Lady Staveley said to herself, as she looked at them.

Augustus looked as though he were detected, and stammered out some question about his mother and the carriage; but Miss Furnival did not for a moment lose her easy presence of mind. 'Lady Staveley,' said she, 'why does not your son go and hunt, or shoot, or fish, instead of staying in the house all day? It seems to me that his time is so heavy on his hands that he will almost have to hang himself.'

'I'm sure I can't tell,' said Lady Staveley, who was not so perfect an actor as her guest.

'I do think gentlemen in the house in the morning always look so unfortunate. You have been endeavouring to make yourself agreeable, but you know you've been yawning.'

'Do you suppose then that men never sit still in the morning?' said Augustus.

'Oh, in their chambers, yes; or on the bench, and perhaps also behind counters; but they very seldom do so in a drawing-room. You have been fidgeting about with the poker till you have destroyed the look of the fireplace.'

'Well, I'll go and fidget up stairs with Graham,' said he; and so he left the room.

'Nasty, sly girl,' said Lady Staveley to herself as she took up her work and sat herself down in her own chair.

Augustus did go up to his friend and found him reading letters. There was no one else in the room, and the door when Augustus reached it was properly closed. 'I think I shall be off to-morrow, old boy,' said Felix.

'Then I think you'll do no such thing,' said Augustus. 'What's in the wind now?'

'The doctor said this morning that I could be moved without danger.'

'He said that it might possibly be done in two or three days—that was all. What on earth makes you so impatient? You've

nothing to do. Nobody else wants to see you; and nobody here wants to get rid of you.'

'You're wrong in all your three statements.'

'The deuce I am! Who wants to get rid of you?'

'That shall come last. I have something to do, and somebody else does want to see me. I've got a letter from Mary here, and another from Mrs. Thomas;' and he held up to view two letters which he had received, and which had, in truth, startled him.

'Mary's duenna;—the artist who is supposed to be moulding the wife.'

'Yes; Mary's duenna, or Mary's artist, whichever you please.'

'And which of them wants to see you? It's just like a woman, to require a man's attendance exactly when he is unable to move.'

Then Felix, though he did not give up the letters to be read, described to a certain extent their contents. 'I don't know what on earth has happened,' he said. 'Mary is praying to be forgiven, and saying that it is not her fault; and Mrs. Thomas is full of apologies, declaring that her conscience forces her to tell everything; and yet, between them both, I do not know what has happened.'

'Miss Snow has probably lost the key of the workbox you gave her.'

'I have not given her a workbox.'

'Then the writing-desk. That's what a man has to endure when he will make himself head schoolmaster to a young lady. And so you're going to look after your charge with your limbs still in bandages?'

'Just so;' and then he took up the two letters and read them again, while Staveley still sat on the foot of the bed. 'I wish I knew what to think about it,' said Felix.

'About what?' said the other. And then there was another pause, and another reading of a portion of the letters.

'There seems something—something almost frightful to me,' said Felix gravely, 'in the idea of marrying a girl in a few months' time, who now, at so late a period of our engagement, writes to me in that sort of cold, formal way.'

'It's the proper moulded-wife style, you may depend,' said Augustus.

'I'll tell you what, Staveley, if you can talk to me seriously for five minutes, I shall be obliged to you. If that is impossible to you, say so, and I will drop the matter.'

'Well, go on; I am serious enough in what I intend to express, even though I may not be so in my words.'

'I'm beginning to have my doubts about this dear girl.'

'I've had my doubts for some time.'

‘Not, mark you, with regard to myself. The question is not now whether I can love her sufficiently for my own happiness. On that side I have no longer the right to a doubt.’

‘But you wouldn’t marry her if you did not love her.’

‘We need not discuss that. But what if she does not love me? What, if she would think it a release to be freed from this engagement? How am I find that out?’

Augustus sat for a while silent, for he did feel that the matter was serious. The case as he looked at it stood thus:—His friend Graham had made a very foolish bargain, from which he would probably be glad to escape, though he could not now bring himself to say as much. But this bargain, bad for him, would probably be very good for the young lady. The young lady, having no shilling of her own, and no merits of birth or early breeding to assist her outlook in the world, might probably regard her ready-made engagement to a clever, kind-hearted, high-spirited man, as an advantage not readily to be abandoned. Staveley, as a sincere friend, was very anxious that the match should be broken off; but he could not bring himself to tell Graham that he thought that the young lady would so wish. According to his idea the young lady must undergo a certain amount of disappointment, and receive a certain amount of compensation. Graham had been very foolish, and must pay for his folly. But in preparing to do so, it would be better that he should see and acknowledge the whole truth of the matter.

‘Are you sure that you have found out your own feelings?’ Staveley said at last; and his tone was then serious enough even for his friend.

‘It hardly matters whether I have or have not,’ said Felix.

‘It matters above all things;—above all things, because as to them you may come to something like certainty. Of the inside of her heart you cannot know so much. The fact I take it is this—that you would wish to escape from this bondage.’

‘No; not unless I thought she regarded it as bondage also. It may be that she does. As for myself, I believe that at the present moment such a marriage would be for me the safest step that I could take.’

‘Safe as against what danger?’

‘All dangers. How, if I should learn to love another woman,—some one utterly out of my reach,—while I am still betrothed to her?’

‘I rarely flatter you, Graham, and don’t mean to do it now; but no girl ought to be out of your reach. You have talent, position, birth, and gifts of nature, which should make you equal to any lady. As for money, the less you have the more you should look to get. But if you would cease to be mad, two years would give you command of an income.’

‘But I shall never cease to be mad.’

‘Who is it that cannot be serious, now?’

‘Well, I will be serious—serious enough. I can afford to be so, as I have received my medical passport for to-morrow. No girl, you say, ought to be ought of my reach. If the girl were one Miss Staveley, should she be regarded as out of my reach?’

‘A man doesn’t talk about his own sister,’ said Staveley, having got up from the bed and walked to the window, ‘and I know you don’t mean anything.’

‘But, by heavens! I do mean a great deal.’

‘What is it you mean, then?’

‘I mean this—What would you say if you learned that I was a suitor for her hand?’

Staveley had been right in saying that a man does not talk about his own sister. When he had declared, with so much affectionate admiration for his friend’s prowess, that he might aspire to the hand of any lady, that one retiring, modest-browed girl had not been thought of by him. A man in talking to another man about women is always supposed to consider those belonging to himself as exempt from the incidents of the conversation. The dearest friends do not talk to each other about their sisters when they have once left school; and a man in such a position as that now taken by Graham has to make fight for his ground as closely as though there had been no former intimacies. My friend Smith in such a matter as that, though I have been hail fellow with him for the last ten years, has very little advantage over Jones, who was introduced to the house for the first time last week. And therefore Staveley felt himself almost injured when Felix Graham spoke to him about Madeline.

‘What would I say? Well—that is a question one does not understand, unless—unless you really meant to state it as a fact that it was your intention to propose to her.’

‘But I mean rather to state it as a fact that it is not my intention to propose to her.’

‘Then we had better not speak of her.’

‘Listen to me a moment. In order that I may not do so, it will be better for me—better for us all, that I should leave the house.’

‘Do you mean to say——?’

‘Yes, I do mean to say! I mean to say all that your mind is now suggesting to you. I quite understand your feelings when you declare that a man does not like to talk of his own sister, and therefore we will talk of your sister no more. Old fellow, don’t look at me as though you meant to drop me.’

Augustus came back to the bedside, and again seating himself, put his hand almost caressingly over his friend’s shoulder. ‘I did not think of this,’ he said.

‘No; one never does think of it,’ Graham replied.

‘And she?’

‘She knows no more of it than that bed-post,’ said Graham. ‘The injury, such as there is, is all on one side. But I’ll tell you who suspects it.’

‘Baker?’

‘Your mother. I am much mistaken if you will not find that she, with all her hospitality, would prefer that I should recover my strength elsewhere.’

‘But you have done nothing to betray yourself.’

‘A mother’s ears are very sharp. I know that it is so. I cannot explain to you how. Do you tell her that I think of getting up to London to-morrow, and see how she will take it. And, Staveley, do not for a moment suppose that I am reproaching her. She is quite right. I believe that I have in no way committed myself—that I have said no word to your sister with which Lady Staveley has a right to feel herself aggrieved; but if she has had the wit to read the thoughts of my bosom, she is quite right to wish that I were out of the house.’

Poor Lady Staveley had been possessed of no such wit at all. The sphynx which she had read had been one much more in her own line. She had simply read the thoughts in her daughter’s bosom—or rather, the feelings in her daughter’s heart.

Augustus Staveley hardly knew what he ought to say. He was not prepared to tell his friend that he was the very brother-in-law for whose connection he would be desirous. Such a marriage for Madeline, even should Madeline desire it, would not be advantageous. When Augustus told Graham that he had gifts of nature which made him equal to any lady, he did not include his own sister. And yet the idea of acquiescing in his friend’s sudden departure was very painful to him. ‘There can be no reason why you should not stay up here, you know,’ at last he said;—and in so saying he pronounced an absolute verdict against poor Felix.

On few matters of moment to a man’s own heart can he speak out plainly the whole truth that is in him. Graham had intended so to do, but had deceived himself. He had not absolutely hoped that his friend would say, ‘Come among us, and be one of us; take her, and be my brother.’ But yet there came upon his heart a black load of disappointment, in that the words which were said were the exact opposite of these. Graham had spoken of himself as unfit to match with Madeline Staveley, and Madeline Staveley’s brother had taken him at his word. The question which Augustus asked himself was this—Was it, or was it not practicable that Graham should remain there without danger of intercourse with his sister? To Felix the question came in a very different shape. After having spoken as he had spoken—might he be allowed to remain there,

enjoying such intercourse, or might he not? That was the question to which he had unconsciously demanded an answer;—and unconsciously he had still hoped that the question might be answered in his favour. He had so hoped, although he was burdened with Mary Snow, and although he had spoken of his engagement with that lady in so rigid a spirit of self-martyrdom. But the question had been answered against him. The offer of a further asylum in the seclusion of that bedroom had been made to him by his friend with a sort of proviso that it would not be well that he should go further than the bedroom, and his inner feelings at once grated against each other, making him wretched and almost angry.

‘Thank you, no; I understand how kind you are, but I will not do that. I will write up to-night, and shall certainly start to-morrow.’

‘My dear fellow——’

‘I should get into a fever, if I were to remain in this house after what I have told you. I could not endure to see you, or your mother, or Baker, or Marian, or any one else. Don’t talk about it. Indeed, you ought to feel that it is not possible. I have made a confounded ass of myself, and the sooner I get away the better. I say—perhaps you would not be angry if I was to ask you to let me sleep for an hour or so now. After that I’ll get up and write my letters.’

He was very sore. He knew that he was sick at heart, and ill at ease, and cross with his friend; and knew also that he was unreasonable in being so. Staveley’s words and manner had been full of kindness. Graham was aware of this, and was therefore the more irritated with himself. But this did not prevent his being angry and cross with his friend.

‘Graham,’ said the other, ‘I see clearly enough that I have annoyed you.’

‘Not in the least. A man falls into the mud, and then calls to another man to come and see him. The man in the mud of course is not comfortable.’

‘But you have called to me, and I have not been able to help you.’

‘I did not suppose you would, so there has been no disappointment. Indeed, there was no possibility for help. I shall follow out the line of life which I have long since chalked out for myself, and I do not expect that I shall be more wretched than other poor devils around me. As far as my idea goes, it all makes very little difference. Now leave me; there’s a good fellow.’

‘Dear old fellow, I would give my right hand if it would make you happy!’

‘But it won’t. Your right hand will make somebody else happy, I hope.’

‘I’ll come up to you again before dinner.’

‘Very well. And, Staveley, what we have now said cannot be forgotten between us; but when we next meet, and ever after, let it be as though it were forgotten.’ Then he settled himself down on the bed, and Augustus left the room.

It will not be supposed that Graham did go to sleep, or that he had any thought of doing so. When he was alone those words of his friend rang over and over again in his ears, ‘No girl ought to be out of your reach.’ Why should Madeline Staveley be out of his reach, simply because she was his friend’s sister? He had been made welcome to that house, and therefore he was bound to do nothing unhandsome by the family. But then he was bound by other laws, equally clear, to do nothing unhandsome by any other family—or by any other lady. If there was anything in Staveley’s words, they applied as strongly to Staveley’s sister as to any other girl. And why should not he, a lawyer, marry a lawyer’s daughter? Sophia Furnival, with her hatful of money, would not be considered too high for him; and in what respect was Madeline Staveley above Sophia Furnival? That the one was immeasurably above the other in all those respects which in his estimation tended towards female perfection, he knew to be true enough; but the fruit which he had been forbidden to gather hung no higher on the social tree than that other fruit which he had been specially invited to pluck and garner.

And then Graham was not a man to think any fruit too high for him. He had no overweening idea of his own deserts, either socially or professionally, nor had he taught himself to expect great things from his own genius; but he had that audacity of spirit which bids a man hope to compass that which he wishes to compass,—that audacity which is both the father and mother of success,—that audacity which seldom exists without the inner capability on which it ought to rest.

But then there was Mary Snow! Augustus Staveley thought but little of Mary Snow. According to his theory of his friend’s future life, Mary Snow might be laid aside without much difficulty. If this were so, why should not Madeline be within his reach? But then was it so? Had he not betrothed himself to Mary Snow in the presence of the girl’s father, with every solemnity and assurance, in a manner fixed beyond that of all other betrothals? Alas, yes; and for this reason it was right that he should hurry away from Noningsby.

Then he thought of Mary’s letter, and of Mrs. Thomas’s letter. What was it that had been done? Mary had written as though she had been charged with some childish offence; but Mrs. Thomas talked solemnly of acquitting her own conscience. What could have happened that had touched Mrs. Thomas in the conscience?

But his thoughts soon ran away from the little house at Peckham,

and settled themselves again at Noningsby. Should he hear more of Madeline's footsteps?—and if not, why should they have been banished from the corridor? Should he hear her voice again at the door,—and if not, why should it have been hushed? There is a silence which may be more eloquent than the sounds which it follows. Had no one in that house guessed the feelings in his bosom, she would have walked along the corridor as usual, and spoken a word with her sweet voice in answer to his word. He felt sure that this would be so no more; but who had stopped it, and why should such sounds be no more heard?

At last he did go to sleep, not in pursuance of any plan formed for doing so; for had he been asked he would have said that sleep was impossible for him. But he did go to sleep, and when he awoke it was dark. He had intended to have got up and dressed on that afternoon, or to have gone through such ceremony of dressing as was possible for him,—in preparation of his next day's exercise; and now he rose up in his bed with a start, angry with himself in having allowed the time to pass by him.

'Lord love you, Mr. Graham, why how you have slept!' said Mrs. Baker. 'If I haven't just sent your dinner down again to keep hot. Such a beautiful pheasant, and the bread sauce'll be lumpy now, for all the world like pap.'

'Never mind the bread sauce, Mrs. Baker;—the pheasant's the thing.'

'And her ladyship's been here, Mr. Graham, only she wouldn't have you woke. She won't hear of your being moved to-morrow, nor yet won't the judge. There was a rumpus down stairs when Mr. Augustus as much as mentioned it. I know one who—'

'You know one who—you were saying?'

'Never mind.—It aint one more than another, but it's all. You aint to leave this to-morrow, so you may just give it over. And indeed your things is all at the wash, so you can't;—and now I'll go down for the pheasant.'

Felix still declared very positively that he should go, but his doing so did not shake Mrs. Baker. The letter-bag he knew did not leave till eight, and as yet it was not much past five. He would see Staveley again after his dinner, and then he would write.

When Augustus left the room in the middle of the day he encountered Madeline wandering about the house. In these days she did wander about the house, as though there were something always to be done in some place apart from that in which she then was. And yet the things which she did were but few. She neither worked nor read, and as for household duties, her share in them was confined almost entirely to the morning and evening teapot.

'It isn't true that he's to go to-morrow morning, Augustus, is it?' said she.

‘Who, Graham? Well; he says that he will. He is very anxious to get to London; and no doubt he finds it stupid enough lying there and doing nothing.’

‘But he can do as much there as he can lying by himself in his own chambers, where I don’t suppose he would have anybody to look after him. He thinks he’s a trouble and all that, and therefore he wants to go. But you know mamma doesn’t mind about trouble of that kind; and what should we think of it afterwards if anything bad was to happen to your friend because we allowed him to leave the house before he was in a fit state to be moved? Of course Mr. Pottinger says so—’ Mr. Pottinger was the doctor. ‘Of course Mr. Pottinger says so, because he thinks he has been so long here, and he doesn’t understand.’

‘But Mr. Pottinger would like to keep a patient.’

‘Oh no; he’s not at all that sort of man. He’d think of mamma,—the trouble I mean of having a stranger in the house. But you know mamma would think nothing of that, especially for such an intimate friend of yours.’

Augustus turned slightly round so as to look more fully into his sister’s face, and he saw that a tear was gathered in the corner of her eye. She perceived his glance and partly shrank under it, but she soon recovered herself and answered it. ‘I know what you mean,’ she said, ‘and if you choose to think so, I can’t help it. But it is horrible—horrible—’ and then she stopped herself, finding that a little sob would become audible if she trusted herself to further words.

‘You know what I mean, Mad?’ he said, putting his arm affectionately round her waist. ‘And what is it that I mean? Come; you and I never have any secrets;—you always say so when you want to get at mine. Tell me what it is that I mean.’

‘I haven’t got any secret.’

‘But what did I mean?’

‘You looked at me, because I don’t want you to let them send Mr. Graham away. If it was old Mr. Furnival I shouldn’t like them to turn him out of this house when he was in such a state as that.’

‘Poor Mr. Furnival; no; I think he would bear it worse than Felix.’

‘Then why should he go? And why—should you look at me in that way?’

‘Did I look at you, Mad? Well, I believe I did. We are to have no secrets; are we?’

‘No,’ said she. But she did not say it in the same eager voice with which hitherto she had declared that they would always tell each other everything.

‘Felix Graham is my friend,’ said he, ‘my special friend; and I hope you will always like my friends. But—’

‘Well?’ she said.

‘You know what I mean, Mad.’

‘Yes,’ she said.

‘That is all, dearest.’ And then she knew that he also had cautioned her not to fall in love with Felix Graham, and she felt angry with him for the caution. ‘Why—why—why——?’ But she hardly knew as yet how to frame the question which she desired to ask herself.

CHAPTER XL.

I CALL IT AWFUL.

‘OH indeed!’ Those had been the words with which Mr. Furnival had received the announcement made by Sir Peregrine as to his proposed nuptials. And as he uttered them the lawyer drew himself up stiffly in his chair, looking much more like a lawyer and much less like an old family friend than he had done the moment before.

Whereupon Sir Peregrine drew himself up also. ‘Yes,’ he said. ‘I should be intrusive if I were to trouble you with my motives, and therefore I need only say further as regards the lady, that I trust that my support, standing as I shall do in the position of her husband, will be more serviceable to her than it could otherwise have been in this trial which she will, I presume, be forced to undergo.’

‘No doubt; no doubt,’ said Mr. Furnival; and then the interview had ended. The lawyer had been anxious to see his client, and had intended to ask permission to do so; but he had felt on hearing Sir Peregrine’s tidings that it would be useless now to make any attempt to see her alone, and that he could speak to her with no freedom in Sir Peregrine’s presence. So he left The Cleeve, having merely intimated to the baronet the fact of his having engaged the services of Mr. Chaffanbrass and Mr. Solomon Aram. ‘You will not see Lady Mason?’ Sir Peregrine had asked. ‘Thank you: I do not know that I need trouble her,’ Mr. Furnival had answered. ‘You of course will explain to her how the case at present stands. I fear she must reconcile herself to the fact of a trial. You are aware, Sir Peregrine, that the offence imputed is one for which bail will be taken. I should propose yourself and her son. Of course I should be happy to lend my own name, but as I shall be on the trial, perhaps it may be as well that this should be avoided.’

Bail will be taken! These words were dreadful in the ears of the expectant bridegroom. Had it come to this; that there was a question whether or no she should be locked up in a prison, like

a felon? But nevertheless his heart did not misgive him. Seeing how terribly she was injured by others, he felt himself bound by the stronger law to cling to her himself. Such was the special chivalry of the man.

Mr. Furnival on his return to London thought almost more of Sir Peregrine than he did either of Lady Mason or of himself. Was it not a pity? Was it not a thousand pities that that aged noble gentleman should be sacrificed? He had felt angry with Sir Peregrine when the tidings were first communicated to him; but now, as he journeyed up to London this feeling of anger was transferred to his own client. This must be her doing, and such doing on her part, while she was in her present circumstances, was very wicked. And then he remembered her guilt,—her probable guilt, and his brow became very black. Her supposed guilt had not been horrible to him while he had regarded it as affecting herself alone, and in point of property affecting Joseph Mason and her son Lucius. He could look forward, sometimes almost triumphantly, to the idea of washing her—so far as this world's washing goes—from that guilt, and setting her up again clear before the world, even though in doing so he should lend a hand in robbing Joseph Mason of his estate. But this dragging down of another—and such another—head into the vortex of ruin and misery was horrible to him. He was not straitlaced, or mealy-mouthed, or overburthened with scruples. In the way of his profession he could do many a thing at which—I express a single opinion with much anxious deference—at which an honest man might be scandalized if it became beneath his judgment unprofessionally. But this he could not stand. Something must be done in the matter. The marriage must be stayed till after the trial,—or else he must himself retire from the defence and explain both to Lady Mason and to Sir Peregrine why he did so.

And then he thought of the woman herself, and his spirit within him became very bitter. Had any one told him that he was jealous of the preference shown by his client to Sir Peregrine, he would have fumed with anger, and thought that he was fuming justly. But such was in truth the case. Though he believed her to have been guilty of this thing, though he believed her to be now guilty of the worse offence of dragging the baronet to his ruin, still he was jealous of her regard. Had she been content to lean upon him, to trust to him as her great and only necessary friend, he could have forgiven all else, and placed at her service the full force of his professional power,—even though by doing so he might have lowered himself in men's minds. And what reward did he expect? None. He had formed no idea that the woman would become his mistress. All that was as obscure before his mind's eye, as though she had been nineteen and he five-and-twenty.

He was to dine at home on this day, that being the first occasion of his doing so for—as Mrs. Furnival declared—the last six months. In truth, however, the interval had been long, though not so long as that. He had a hope that having announced his intention, he might find the coast clear and hear Martha Biggs spoken of as a dear one lately gone. But when he arrived at home Martha Biggs was still there. Under circumstances as they now existed Mrs. Furnival had determined to keep Martha Biggs by her, unless any special edict for her banishment should come forth. Then, in case of such special edict, Martha Biggs should go, and thence should arise the new casus belli. Mrs. Furnival had made up her mind that war was expedient,—nay, absolutely necessary. She had an idea, formed no doubt from the reading of history, that some allies require a smart brush now and again to blow away the clouds of distrust which become engendered by time between them; and that they may become better allies than ever afterwards. If the appropriate time for such a brush might ever come, it had come now. All the world,—so she said to herself,—was talking of Mr. Furnival and Lady Mason. All the world knew of her injuries.

Martha Biggs was second cousin to Mr. Crook's brother's wife—I speak of that Mr. Crook who had been professionally known for the last thirty years as the partner of Mr. Round. It had been whispered in the office in Bedford Row—such whisper I fear originating with old Round—that Mr. Furnival admired his fair client. Hence light had fallen upon the eyes of Martha Biggs, and the secret of her friend was known to her. Need I trace the course of the tale with closer accuracy?

'Oh, Kitty,' she had said to her friend with tears that evening—'I cannot bear to keep it to myself any more! I cannot when I see you suffering so. It's awful.'

'Cannot bear to keep what, Martha?'

'Oh, I know. Indeed all the town knows it now.'

'Knows what? You know how I hate that kind of thing. If you have anything to say, speak out.'

This was not kind to such a faithful friend as Martha Biggs; but Martha knew what sacrifices friendship such as hers demanded, and she did not resent it.

'Well then;—if I am to speak out, it's—Lady Mason. And I do say that it's shameful, quite shameful;—and awful; I call it awful.'

Mrs. Furnival had not said much at the time to encourage the fidelity of her friend, but she was thus justified in declaring to herself that her husband's goings on had become the talk of all the world;—and his goings on especially in that quarter in which she had long regarded them with so much dismay. She was not

therefore prepared to welcome him on this occasion of his coming home to dinner by such tokens of friendly feeling as the dismissal of her friend to Red Lion Square. When the moment for absolute war should come Martha Biggs should be made to depart.

Mr. Furnival when he arrived at his own house was in a thoughtful mood, and disposed for quiet and domestic meditation. Had Miss Biggs not been there he could have found it in his heart to tell everything about Lady Mason to his wife, asking her counsel as to what he should do with reference to that marriage. Could he have done so, all would have been well; but this was not possible while that red-faced lump of a woman from Red Lion Square sat in his drawing-room, making everything uncomfortable.

The three sat down to dinner together, and very little was said between them. Mr. Furnival did try to be civil to his wife, but wives sometimes have a mode of declining such civilities without committing themselves to overt acts of war. To Miss Biggs Mr. Furnival could not bring himself to say anything civil, seeing that he hated her; but such words as he did speak to her she received with grim griffin-like austerity, as though she were ever meditating on the awfulness of his conduct. And so in truth she was. Why his conduct was more awful in her estimation since she had heard Lady Mason's name mentioned, than when her mind had been simply filled with general ideas of vague conjugal infidelity, I cannot say; but such was the case. 'I call it awful,' were the first words she again spoke when she found herself once more alone with Mrs. Furnival in the drawing-room. And then she sat down over the fire, thinking neither of her novel nor her knitting, with her mind deliciously filled with the anticipation of coming catastrophes.

"If I sit up after half-past ten would you mind going to bed?" said Mrs. Furnival, when they had been in the drawing-room about ten minutes.

"Oh no, not in the least," said Miss Biggs. "I'll be sure to go." But she thought it very unkind, and she felt as a child does who is deceived in a matter of being taken to the play. If no one goes the child can bear it. But to see others go, and to be left behind, is too much for the feelings of any child,—or of Martha Biggs.

Mr. Furnival had no inclination for sitting alone over his wine on this occasion. Had it been possible for him he would have preferred to have gone quickly up stairs, and to have taken his cup of coffee from his wife's hand with some appreciation of domestic comfort. But there could be no such comfort to him while Martha Biggs was there, so he sat down stairs, sipping his port according to his custom, and looking into the fire for a solution of his difficulties about Lady Mason. He began to wish that he had never seen Lady Mason, and to reflect that the intimate friendship of

pretty women often brings with it much trouble. He was resolved on one thing. He would not go down into court and fight that battle for Lady Orme. Were he to do so the matter would have taken quite a different phase,—one that he had not at all anticipated. In case that his present client should then have become Lady Orme, Mr. Chaffanbrass and Mr. Solomon Aram might carry on the battle between them, with such assistance as they might be able to get from Messrs. Slow and Bideawhile. He became angry as he drank his port, and in his anger he swore that it should be so. And then as his anger became hot at the close of his libations, he remembered that Martha Biggs was up stairs, and became more angry still. And thus when he did go into the drawing-room at some time in the evening not much before ten, he was not in a frame of mind likely to bring about domestic comfort.

He walked across the drawing-room, sat down in an arm-chair by the table, and took up the last number of a review, without speaking to either of them. Whereupon Mrs. Furnival began to ply her needle which had been lying idly enough upon her work, and Martha Biggs fixed her eyes intently upon her book. So they sat twenty minutes without a word being spoken, and then Mrs. Furnival inquired of her lord whether he chose to have tea.

‘Of course I shall,—when you have it,’ said he.

‘Don’t mind us,’ said Mrs. Furnival.

‘Pray don’t mind me,’ said Martha Biggs. ‘Don’t let me be in the way.’

‘No, I won’t,’ said Mr. Furnival. Whereupon Miss Biggs again jumped up in her chair as though she had been electrified. It may be remembered that on a former occasion Mr. Furnival had sworn at her—or at least in her presence.

‘You need not be rude to a lady in your own house, because she is my friend,’ said Mrs. Furnival.

‘Bother,’ said Mr. Furnival. ‘And now if we are going to have any tea, let us have it.’

‘I don’t think I’ll mind about tea to-night, Mrs. Furnival,’ said Miss Biggs, having received a notice from her friend’s eye that it might be well for her to depart. ‘My head aches dreadful, and I shall be better in bed. Good-night, Mrs. Furnival.’ And then she took her candle and went away.

For the next five minutes there was not a word said. No tea had been ordered, although it had been mentioned. Mrs. Furnival had forgotten it among the hot thoughts that were running through her mind, and Mr. Furnival was indifferent upon the subject. He knew that something was coming, and he resolved that he would have the upper hand let that something be what it might. He was being ill used,—so he said to himself—and would not put up with it.

At last the battle began. He was not looking, but he heard her first movement as she prepared herself. 'Tom!' she said, and then the voice of the war goddess was again silent. He did not choose to answer her at the instant, and then the war goddess rose from her seat and again spoke. 'Tom!' she said, standing over him and looking at him.

'What is it you mean?' said he, allowing his eyes to rise to her face over the top of his book.

'Tom!' she said for the third time.

'I'll have no nonsense, Kitty,' said he. 'If you have anything to say, say it.'

Even then she had intended to be affectionate,—had so intended at the first commencement of her address. She had no wish to be a war goddess. But he had assisted her attempt at love by no gentle word, by no gentle look, by no gentle motion. 'I have this to say,' she replied; 'you are disgracing both yourself and me, and I will not remain in this house to be a witness to it.'

'Then you may go out of the house.' These words, be it remembered, were uttered not by the man himself, but by the spirit of port wine within the man.

'Tom, do you say that;—after all?'

'By heavens I do say it! I'll not be told in my own drawing-room, even by you, that I am disgracing myself.'

'Then why do you go after that woman down to Hamworth? All the world is talking of you. At your age too! You ought to be ashamed of yourself.'

'I can't stand this,' said he, getting up and throwing the book from him right across the drawing-room floor; 'and, by heavens! I won't stand it.'

'Then why do you do it, sir?'

'Kitty, I believe the devil must have entered into you to drive you mad.'

'Oh, oh, oh! very well, sir. The devil in the shape of drink and lust has entered into you. But you may understand this; I—will—not—consent to live with you while such deeds as these are being done.' And then without waiting for another word, she stormed out of the room.

END OF VOL. I.

ORLEY FARM.



ORLEY FARM.

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE,

AUTHOR OF

"DOCTOR THORNE," "BARCHESTER TOWERS," "FRAMLEY PARSONAGE," ETC.

With Illustrations

BY J. E. MILLAIS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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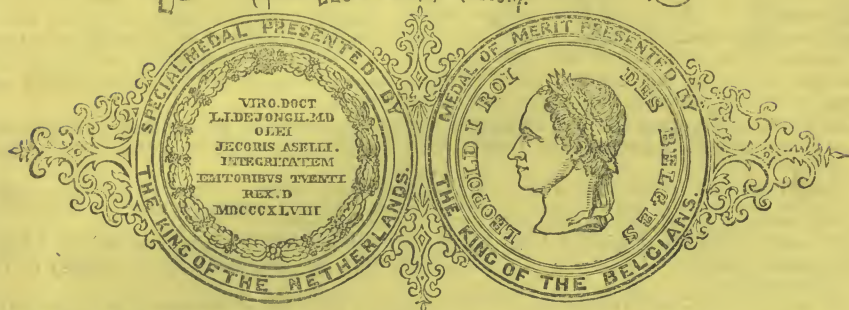
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[TURN OVER.]

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Table Spoons	36 0	48 0	54 0
Do. Forks	36 0	48 0	54 0
DeSSERT Spoons	27 0	38 0	40 0
Do. Forks	27 0	38 0	40 0
Tee Spoons	16 0	20 0	24 0
Soup Ladles each	12 0	16 0	16 0
Gravy Spoons	7 0	10 0	10 0
Sauce Ladles	4 0	6 0	5 0

MAPPIN BROTHERS CELEBRATED TABLE CUTLERY.

Two dozen full-size Table Knives, ivory handles	£2	4 0
One-and-a-half dozen full size Cheese ditto	1	4 0
One pair regular Meat Carvers	0	7 6
One pair Express-size ditto	0	8 6
One pair Poultry Carvers	0	7 6
One Steel for sharpening	0	3 0

Complete Service

Ordinary Quality.	Medium Quality.	Best Quality.
£2 4 0	£3 6 0	£4 12 0
1 4 0	1 14 0	2 11 0
0 7 6	0 11 0	0 15 6
0 8 6	0 12 0	0 16 6
0 7 6	0 11 0	0 15 6
0 3 0	0 4 0	0 6 0

A costly Book of Engravings, with Prices attached, may be had on application. Estimates furnished for Services of Plating Hotels, Steam Ships, and Regimental Messes.

MAPPIN BROTHERS, 67 & 68, KING WILLIAM STREET, LONDON BRIDGE. Manufactory: Queen's Cutlery Works, Sheffield

MAPPIN BROTHERS' Table Knives still maintain their unrivalled superiority; all their blades being their own Sheffield manufacture, are of the first quality, with secure ivory handles, which do not come loose in hot water; and the difference in price is occasioned solely by the superior quality and thickness of the ivory handles. Table Cutlery, Razors, Pocket Cutlery, and Scissors, of their own manufacture, in stock for exportation, at Sheffield prices.